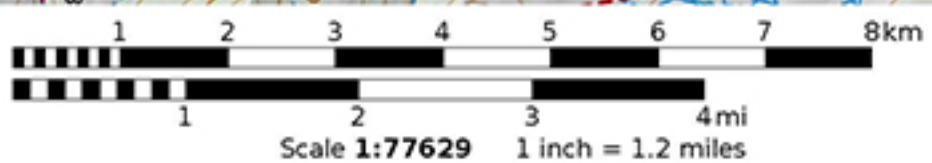
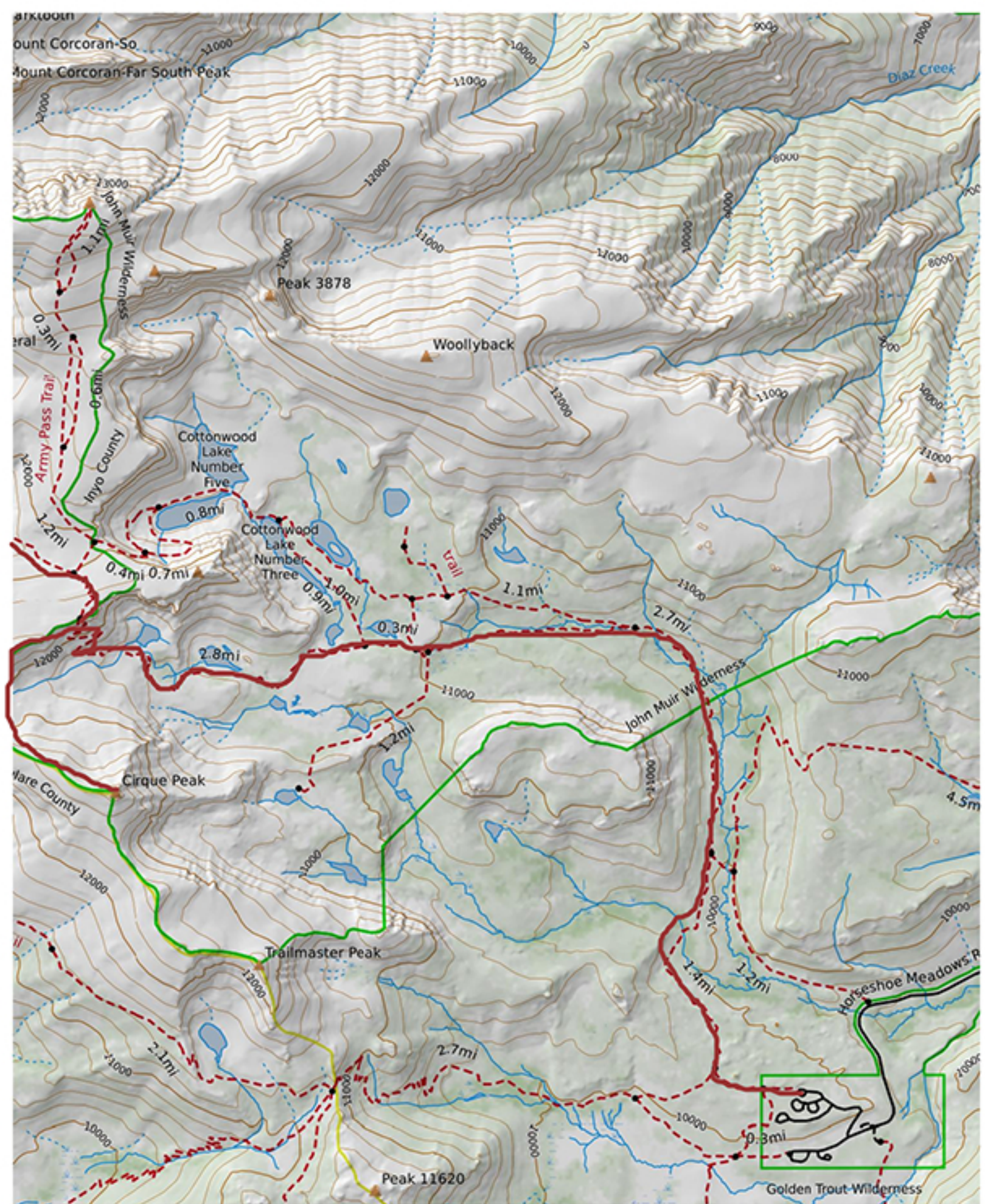
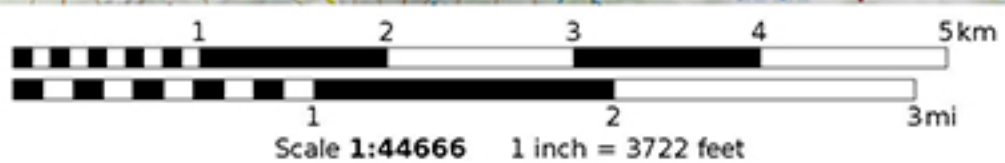


Mercator Projection
 WGS84
 USNG Zone 11SLA
 CalTopo.com



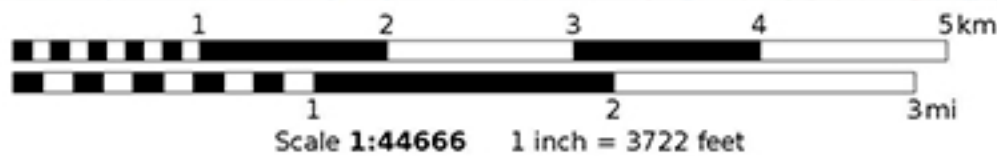


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Mitre Basin fastpack & mountain climbing

Distance:

50 miles (variable based on what peaks you climb & routes you take)

Elevation Gain/Loss:

15475' (variable based on what, and how many, peaks you climb)

Altitude Range:

9900' - 13850' (variable based on what peaks you climb)

Location:

Horseshoe Meadows, Cottonwood Lakes t/h, Southern Sierra

Suggested Map:

Tom Harrison Maps 'Mt Whitney Zone'

Suggested Guidebook:

RJ Secor's 'The High Sierra: Peaks, Passes and Trails'

Time Of Year:

Summer/Fall

Directions From Bishop:

395 S to Lone Pine, turn right (West) on Whitney Portal Rd, then several miles up turn left on Horseshoe Meadows Rd. This paved road switchbacks steeply up into the Horseshoe Meadows basin. There are 2 trailheads which can be confusing. The road deadends at the Cottonwood Pass t/h. The t/h for this route is the Cottonwood Lakes t/h, a right turn about a ½ mile before the other t/h.

Route Description:

Follow signs for 12200' New Army Pass, 8 miles in. There are numerous, mostly signed trail junctions on the way to the pass. It is easy to accidentally end up at the Cottonwood Lakes instead of on the trail slightly further south. If this happens you can continue up Old Army Pass, which crosses the crest just north, and slightly lower, of New Army Pass. The two trails merge just west of the crest as you begin the descent. Descend off New Army Pass to 10700' following signs for the Soldier Lakes. There is a good trail to the lower Soldier Lake that skirts its western shore and quickly becomes a use trail that climbs you steeply out of the basin. This trail fizzles out as you contour along the mixed rock and forest ridge, staying to the east of Rock Creek, which drains Mitre Basin. The rest of this route is cross country until you return back to the Soldier Lakes on the way back out. The travel is easy through meadows and across granite slabs into the heart of Mitre Basin. Sky Blue Lake at 11545' makes a great base camp for

climbing peaks in the area, or, if you want a bit of forest cover, camp down below the lake near 11300' in one of the final small clusters of trees.

There are numerous named 13000'+ peaks with class 2-3 routes surrounding you to climb from Mitre Basin. The peaks I climbed on this trip were Cirque Peak (class 1 off of New Army Pass) on Day 1 on my way into Mitre Basin; Newcomb, Chamberlin & Pickering on Day 2; and Irvine & Mallory on Day 3. There is a lot of loose rock on some of these peaks and route-finding, to keep it from turning into 4th or 5th class, or really unpleasant 3rd class, can be tricky. The ridgeline traverse between Newcomb and Chamberlin is mostly great rock and classic Sierra 3rd class. Pickering is a slog except for the more solid talus up near the summit. Accessing the crest containing Mts Irvine, Mallory, LeConte & Corcoran from Mitre basin requires skillful route-finding and map reading to choose the proper chutes and a willingness to spend time on very steep and loose class 2 slopes. For this reason it is prime Sierra Bighorn Sheep habitat and you have an excellent chance of seeing them gracefully moving through this tedious terrain. For a variation on the way out descend back to the trailhead via Old Army Pass; however if there are still significant lingering snowfields New Army Pass is usually easier to negotiate.